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## **The Tube on YouTube: TV Series, Media Strategies, and User Tactics in a Transmedia Environment**

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This study analyzes the traffic generated on YouTube around television series. We selected a sample of 314 short YouTube videos about 21 Spanish TV series that premiered in 2013 by Spain's three most popular mainstream television networks (Telecinco, Antena 3, and La1). These videos, which together received more than 24 million views, were classified according to two key variables: the nature (official or nonofficial) of the YouTube channel on which they were located and the exclusivity of their content (already broadcast on TV or Web exclusive). The analysis allows us to characterize the strategies used by TV networks on YouTube and the activity of fans as well as their efforts in the construction of a transmedia narrative universe around TV series.

*Keywords: YouTube, TV series, transmedia storytelling, TV networks, fans, engagement*

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau (1984) highlighted the productive activity inherent in consumption. This activity, which is seen by classical economics and other social sciences as the devouring, extinction, and disappearance of all that is produced for that consumption, reaches a new dimension when it is conceived as a tactic that opposes the strategies of production. As de Certeau (1984) pointed out, "The analysis of the images broadcast by television (representation) and of the time spent watching television (behaviour) should be complemented by a study of what the cultural consumer 'makes' or 'does' during this time and with these images" (pp. xii–xiii). In his view, this consumer production is hidden, devious, dispersed, silent, and almost invisible, "because it does not manifest itself

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through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order" (pp. xii–xiii).

If it is true that consumption preserves an inscrutable dark side of unpredictability and intimacy—de Certeau spoke of "the enigma of the consumer-sphinx" (1984, p. 31)—it seems clear that many consumption tactics are no longer invisible, but are now ubiquitous and universally accessible. Social networks have become the privileged stage where the action of consumers takes place. This action is located in a space, is registered, and can be commented on, perfected, and prescribed to other consumers. However, this does not prevent social networks from simultaneously becoming the preferred channel for companies, brands, and products.

In the wake of de Certeau's speculations, Lev Manovich wrote the article "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life: From Mass Consumption to Mass Cultural Production?" (2009), in which he noted the relative lack of distinction between the strategies of production and the tactics of consumption in the Web 2.0 era. This new era is characterized by a generalized *post-productivity* (Bourriaud, 2005; Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, 2012), by the tendency to remix and sample contents, and by the visibility of it all. For Manovich, an example of this is YouTube, and particularly anime music videos (AMVs). As Manovich points out, they are not exactly "transient" or "unmappable," but "they very much exemplify de Certeauvian everyday life; the great majority of AMVs consists of segments lifted from commercial anime and commercial music" (2009, p. 326). Their creativity is different from the romantic and modernist model of making it new, but they do exhibit a "tactical creativity," which operates in an environment that is becoming increasingly important in our everyday lives: the one that corresponds to our media consumption.

Burgess (2011) shares this opinion but also suggests that this tactical creativity is not just a game for the *homo videoludens*, who furnish external audiovisual universes to their liking in order to appropriate them and make them more comfortable. It is necessary to not only moderate the creative euphoria but simultaneously highlight the new economic dimension: "These previously invisible audience practices leave material traces on the YouTube network, and this evidence of an attentive audience is essential to demonstrating the value of YouTube to advertisers" (p. 327).

This article analyzes these everyday creative tactics and the Web strategies of TV networks when they are deployed on YouTube in an uneven manner and fight for hegemony in terms of visibility. The core text examined is Spanish TV series, and we will evaluate to what degree YouTube can be considered a TV series touchpoint, capable of a transmedia expansion and a deepening of the series' narrative universes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Transmedia storytelling is a cultural phenomenon characteristic of the "era of convergence." It consists of the systematic dissemination of important elements of a fictional narrative through various media to promote a unified and coordinated entertainment experience across all these channels. Transmedia storytelling has been fully studied when TV programs act as the core text (Evans, 2011; Jenkins, 2006), and especially when the expanded narrative universe grows around fictional serial TV (Askwith, 2007; Mittell, 2015).

### **Main Empirical and Theoretical Developments**

One of the earliest and most influential empirical studies on the circulation of contents on YouTube was carried out in 2007 by Burgess and Green (2009), based on a sample of 4,320 videos. The researchers considered the first 1,080 videos, sorted according to the four popularity categories used at the time by YouTube: most viewed, most favorited, most discussed, and most responded. The study considered two fundamental axes that, after being adjusted, also guide our study: the (apparent) identity of the video's uploader (a traditional media company, a small or medium-sized company, an independent production company, or an amateur user) and the (apparent) origin of the images (industrial or professional production by an established media practice or user-generated content).

The analysis concluded that:

1. The proportion of videos created by amateur users is slightly higher than that produced by media professionals (regardless of whether the YouTube channels that uploaded the videos are professional): 50% vs. 42%, respectively (8% dubious).
2. If we consider the identity of the channel, the numbers were even more favorable to users (regardless of whether their videos were original): 61% of the videos were uploaded to users' channels, 8% belonged to channels operated by large media corporations, and 20% belonged to small and medium-sized companies.
3. The videos uploaded by large media corporations constituted the great majority of the sample of most viewed videos (717 of the 1,080 most viewed videos). However, the proportion of videos uploaded by large media corporations was nearly equal to that of user-generated videos in the most favorited category (511 and 466, respectively). Moreover, the results were inverted in the most responded and most discussed categories, in which amateur productions were predominant over the professional productions: 683 versus 308 and 751 versus 276, respectively. In short, viewers preferred watching videos produced by large media corporations, but the videos created by amateur users engaged other users in more participatory interactions (such as sharing opinions, creating video responses, commenting). As the authors state, "It is this conversational character that distinguishes the mode of engagement in the categories dominated by user-created content from those dominated by traditional media" (Burgess and Green, 2009, p. 54).
4. Although the top 10 most viewed videos were mostly produced by traditional media companies, especially music companies (Universal Music Group, Sony BMG, and CBS), or by artists backed by these large media companies (Linkin Park, Britney Spears), the channels with more subscribers were those of "YouTube stars"—that is, celebrities formed on YouTube, whether strictly amateurs, small and medium-sized enterprises, or artists who had achieved success in the network.

Along with the studies on the amateur or professional nature of YouTube channels, other works on the community and conversational dimension of YouTube have gained force. The complexity of the communicative interactions enabled by YouTube has been highlighted from the perspective of pragmatics and computer-mediated communication theory (Dynel, 2014). Other works that have gained presence are those that, apart from examining fans' creativity, analyze the exploitation of the freely available work of users by other instances: traditional media, companies publicized on the Web, and YouTube itself (Andrejevic, 2009; Dijck, 2009, 2013).

The evolution of YouTube from 2005 has been intense in terms of not only the number of videos it hosts and its penetration in the population but business property (Google bought YouTube in late 2006), its architecture as a social network, and its strategy toward users, advertisers, and media corporations. The relationship between YouTube and TV networks has changed: The initial distrust and even the legal controversy over the unauthorized circulation of the content owned by TV networks on YouTube, which allegedly favored the massive migration of viewers from TV to the social network (Waldvogel, 2007), have been fixed. Now most TV networks have not only made their programming available over their own websites but created their own YouTube channels and signed agreements with YouTube to share the advertising revenue generated by their contents. These corporate media players now claim visibility on YouTube and tip the scales in favor of professional-generated content and against user-generated content, because the former are perceived as more ad-friendly. It would seem that we have traveled from the *interpretative flexibility* or volatility of YouTube functions and uses, which is still undergoing indeterminacy, negotiation, and experimentation, to the *state of relative cultural and sociotechnical stability* of the YouTube network (Burgess, 2015). However, this stability has been achieved at the expense of a swing from "an amateur-led, individually driven mediascape" to a "professional-led, institution-driven traditional mediascape" (Kim, 2012, p. 54).

### **Main Variables Measured**

#### ***The Official/Nonofficial Variable***

The official/nonofficial distinction does not refer to the authorship or producer of the video, but to the person who uploaded it to YouTube. Each TV network, each TV series, even the TV series' production companies tend to have their own YouTube channel, through which they upload different audiovisual materials: full episodes and seasons of the series they broadcast or produce; promotional material, both new or previously broadcast on TV; contents oriented to the transmedia (narrative or not) expansion of the series. However, the channels operated by the series' fans are often more effective than the official channels in the dissemination of the contents produced by the TV networks (in addition to edited versions or never-seen-before footage of the series). Thus, the distinction involves the identification of the official/nonofficial nature of the video's uploader with a high degree of reliability.

The nonofficial category is broad and involves a useful distinction: Some nonofficial channels are managed and nurtured by fans who are eager to share their likes (or dislikes) about the narrative universe

of their object of interest, but there are also nonofficial channels that are managed by companies, associations, and individuals that use YouTube as a professional showcase.<sup>3</sup>

### ***The Exclusive/Nonexclusive Variable***

The exclusive/nonexclusive variable refers to whether the content of the video uploaded to YouTube has been shown on television, which is the “mothership” (Jenkins, 2010) or the center of the transmedia galaxy, and for which YouTube operates as a satellite in its role of audiovisual content distributor. Our decision to include broadcast or never-shown material relates not only to amateur users. In the same way that we differentiate between *user-generated content* and *user-circulated content* (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 15), it is possible to distinguish between *corporate-generated content* and *corporate-circulated content*.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the official media corporation can also choose to replicate in YouTube videos that have been or that will be premiered on TV, or to add value to its YouTube channel by uploading Web-exclusive videos—that is, to contribute to the expansion of the series through properly narrative, diegetic extensions (Askwith, 2007; Mittell, 2015) or through “orienting” extradiegetic paratexts (Gray, 2010; Mittell, 2015).

For the purposes of this study, nonexclusive YouTube content refers mostly to scenes or fragments of episodes that are uploaded to YouTube with no alteration. In a previous study (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, Ortiz-Gordo, & Sáez-Núñez, 2014), we found that all the episodes of the sample of TV series were fully available in the official websites of the TV networks as well as on their official YouTube channels (Antena 3 and La1, but not Telecinco). If we limit the search to short videos, we find that YouTube is plagued by nonexclusive videos that include unaltered scenes or fragments taken from the TV series and that are available in both official and nonofficial channels.

With regard to exclusive videos, it is relatively simple to detect alterations to the original material. These alterations may include the elimination of original dialogue and the inclusion of music (“songvids” or “vids”) (Coppa, 2008; Russo, 2009) as well as the selection and juxtaposition of originally

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<sup>3</sup> We found three categories of professional nonofficial videos: (1) small media companies that operate exclusively online and comment on news related to the series; (2) professional videos of products and brands that appear in an episode of a series; and (3) acting demo reels uploaded by actors in their YouTube channels.

<sup>4</sup> Burgess and Green (2009) do not combine the two categories of the images’ origin (professional and amateur) with the two categories of the channel’s identity (professional or amateur). They assume that all amateur videos will be uploaded by amateur users and that amateur channels can accommodate videos taken from traditional media as well as those that are self-created. However, television companies may integrate in their official YouTube channels web-exclusive contents (about their television shows). These YouTube channels of traditional media companies may include amateur contents and may even encourage the production of amateur videos with some kind of incentive (a prize competition). The specificity of our research demands particular attention to this dimension, because we want to evaluate the efforts made by TV networks and media corporations in the transmedia promotion and expansion of their own TV products and to compare it with the activity of fans.

disjointed fragments whose common element is a plot or an actor ("fan remixes" or "fan edits"). More openly transgressive, transformative, or parodic alterations are the mixing of shots and countershots from different sources with comic effects; dialogue that is created and does not correspond to the original video; voice-over and subtitles that suggest different (not the original) meanings, which modify the identity of the characters or the tone of the conversation ("fan recuts" and "fake fan trailers"); and even mashups that mix two or more narrative universes (Jensen, 2013). Predictably, these contents, especially those considered out of the narrative canon, are produced by amateur fans.

We also consider as exclusive videos those involving novel narrative developments out of the TV show: interstitial microstories, parallel stories, peripheral stories, sequels, and prequels (Scolari, 2009), substantiated in formats or genres that emerged from the convergence of telecommunications and computing but were quickly adopted and implemented by traditional media corporations when they entered the online business (mobisodes, webisodes, Web series) and were productively adopted by the fandom.

In short, the official/nonofficial classification refers to the channel's (natural or legal) personality (which involves the video's uploader, who may or may not be the author of its content), and the exclusive/nonexclusive classification refers to the originality of the content (its autonomy or lack thereof with respect to the TV mothership).

### **Spanish TV Series and Spanish YouTube**

The sample of TV programs whose related videos were searched on YouTube consisted of 21 TV series that premiered a new season in 2013 on one of Spain's three national mainstream TV networks. The selected networks—Telecinco, Antena 3, and La1—reached the highest audience share in Spain in 2013, with 13.4%, 13.4%, and 10.2%, respectively. The positions of these networks persisted in 2014: Telecinco took the lead with 14.5%, followed by Antena 3 with 13.6% and La1 with 10.0%. Telecinco and Antena 3 are the flagship channels of the two hegemonic groups in the Spanish television market: Mediaset and Atresmedia, respectively. Together, the channels operated by these two groups captured 58.4% of the audience share and 86% of the advertising investment in 2014 (Barlovento Comunicación, 2014). The audience share and average audience size pertaining to each series in 2013 (Barlovento Comunicación, 2014), as well as its genre, launching year, and season aired in 2013 are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Title, Genre, Channel, Release Year, Season Aired, Average Audience Share, and Average Audience Size for 21 Spanish TV Series, 2013.**

Title	Genre	Channel	Launching Year	Season 2013	Share 2013	Audience 2013 x000
<i>Cuéntame</i>	Drama	La1	2001	14th	20.49%	4,101
<i>Gran Reserva</i>	Drama		2010	3rd	13.46%	2,771
<i>Gran Reserva. El origen</i>	Drama		2013	1st	7.53%	881
<i>Isabel</i>	Historical Fiction		2012	2nd	16.80%	3,350
<i>Águila roja</i>	Adventure		2009	5th	23.38%	4,469
<i>Amar es para siempre</i>	Drama	Antena3	2013	1st–2nd	13.62%	1,686
<i>El barco</i>	Adventure Mystery Science-Fiction		2011	3rd	12.60%	2,264
<i>El secreto de Puente Viejo</i>	Drama		2011	2nd–3rd	17.32%	1,959
<i>Fenómenos</i>	Comedy		2012	1st	12.74%	2,339
<i>Con el culo al aire</i>	Comedy		2012	2nd	17.02%	3,039
<i>Bandolera</i>	Drama		2011	2nd	12.83%	1,681
<i>Luna, el misterio de Calenda</i>	Mystery Fantasy		2012	2nd	12.87%	2,288
<i>Gran Hotel</i>	Drama		2011	3rd	13.98%	2,636
<i>Vive cantando</i>	Comedy		2013	1st	15.19%	2,614
<i>El tiempo entre costuras</i>	Drama		2013	1st	25.27%	4,828
<i>Aida</i>	Comedy	Telecinco	2005	10th	14.41%	2,690
<i>La que se avecina</i>	Comedy		2007	6th–7th	21.79%	4,181
<i>Frágiles</i>	Drama		2012	2nd	10.03%	1,278
<i>Familia</i>	Dramedy		2013	1st	11.93%	2,121
<i>Tierra de lobos</i>	Drama		2010	3rd	12.40%	2,078
<i>El don de Alba</i>	Drama Fantasy		2013	1st	8.94%	1,571

We detected a noticeable difference in the way the TV networks manage the visibility of their contents on YouTube. Telecinco sued YouTube (Google) in 2008 for a violation of its intellectual property rights by allowing users to upload videos containing material from its television channel, which is reminiscent of what Viacom did in 2007. Despite a defeat in the courts in 2008, Google appealed and eventually won the case in 2010. However, in 2014, the Mediaset group (Telecinco) presented an appeal

to the Supreme Court. Of course, the TV network's contents are still being massively shared by YouTube users, and its strategy is to denounce and block videos that contain content owned by it.

The other two television operators considered in this study, Antena 3 and La1, which are part of Atresmedia (private) and RTVE (public), follow different strategies that, nonetheless, favor interaction with users through social networks, albeit with certain limitations (Franquet & Vila, 2014; Tur-Viñes & Rodríguez Ferrándiz, 2014). Antena 3 and RTVE manage their own YouTube channels, which in December 2015 had 1,567,455 and 144,216 subscribers, respectively.

With regard to the use of the social network in Spain, the Spanish Association for Media Research pointed out in its report for October 2013 to May 2014 (whose period of analysis is closest to the TV broadcasts and the sample of YouTube videos under study) that YouTube was the website with more unique visitors (20.4 million in the last 30 days)—more than the main news websites, such as *Marca* (5.1 million) and *El País* (4.4 million), and the websites of TV channels, such as Antena 3 (2.5 million) and RTVE.es (1.6 million) (AIMC, 2014). According to the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IABSpain, 2015), YouTube is the most valued social network in Spain. Its penetration reaches 66%, the second highest after Facebook (96%). In addition, YouTube occupies the second position in terms of frequency of use (an average of 3.5 hours per week).

Despite these data, users of YouTube Spain (created in June 2006) show very limited activity on social networks. According to Gallardo and Jorge (2010), the 15 most viewed videos from when YouTube launched in Spain to December 2009 accumulated an average of more than 20 million visits. But only 0.09% of the visitors left comments, 0.072% scored them, and, almost no one reacted to videos by uploading other videos (0.0003%).

On the other hand, during extensive research for his doctoral dissertation, Gallardo (2013) analyzed a sample of 278 videos accumulating 650 million visits, selected from among the most viewed, most commented, most responded, and most liked video charts from the 2006 beginning of YouTube Spain to the end of 2009. He found that users of YouTube Spain especially watched videos related to TV programming (84% of the total time spent on YouTube), broadcast by Spanish TV networks (81% of the total time spent viewing TV contents on YouTube), and particularly the mainstream TV channels (66%). The content related to fictional series represented 44% of the total time spent viewing TV contents on YouTube, followed by videos of sports broadcasts—mainly football (21%), entertainment shows (16%), news programs (11%), and video clips of reality shows (8%). The author concluded that Spanish Internet users automatically perpetuate their mode of consumption of conventional television when they watch audiovisual content on YouTube. The viewings depend on the television programming being broadcast at that moment (domestic shows in particular rather than foreign ones), and viewers are passive (rather than interactive).

We lack studies that analyze two basic features that define the most visited and highest ranked videos originating in television: the nature of the channel (official or nonofficial) that uploads them and the nature of the content (exclusive or nonexclusive) in relation to the program.



## Method

### *Research Objectives and Variables*

The objectives of this study are to analyze the activity generated around videos of Spanish TV series posted on YouTube, identify the nature of the videos' source and content, and assess the degree of interaction and feedback that takes place.

The number of views is a quantitative indicator, but YouTube uses other default criteria to sort videos in search results. Unfortunately, YouTube neither explains in detail the factors that justify the rank for a single video nor clarifies the exact weight of those factors.<sup>5</sup> In any case, this rank must be taken into consideration, because we assume that typical users do not apply the "sort by view count" filter in their searches. Instead, they just search for the term of interest (in this case, the name of the TV series) and then scroll through the results in the order determined by YouTube.

To complement the testing of the hypotheses, we sorted videos of each TV series by (internal) rank not only by the view count (which allows us to compare the different videos available for each TV series) but according to the degree of user interaction variables (like/dislike and comments).

If we select a significant number of examples, take the result of the default search (based on YouTube rank, not on view count), and obtain results relating to other popularity indicators, it is possible to alter the balance between the official/nonofficial and exclusive/nonexclusive nature of the videos. Thus, we formulated several research questions:

- RQ1: Are there more official or nonofficial videos among the higher ranked videos of the 21 TV series? What is their average number of views?*
- RQ2: Are there more exclusive or nonexclusive videos among the higher ranked videos of the 21 TV series? What is their average number of views?*
- RQ3: Which of the four possible types of video is predominant among the higher ranked videos of the 21 TV series? What is the average number of views reached by each type?*
- RQ4: How do other popularity variables (such as like, dislike, comments, and subscribers) behave in relation to the origin and nature of the video?*

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<sup>5</sup> The possible ranking factors are (1) the video's *relevance* (the number of words in the video title that match the query); (2) *user engagement*, which includes *favorites*, *number of comments*, and *number of likes*; and (3) *trust and authority of the video owner*, which include *membership age*, *total channel views*, and *total number of subscribers*. Other ranking factors are videos' audience retention (the percentage of the video people tend to watch), video quality (HD videos will rank higher than low-quality videos), and the accuracy of metadata (titles, tags, descriptions). See "YouTube Video Search Ranking Factors" (n.d.).

### ***Sample of Videos***

All searches were conducted in one week, July 21–27, 2014, so that the data were homogeneous and comparable. We selected the absolute first 100 videos according to the number of views from the search results provided for each of the series (we used the name of the series as a search term, dismissed results that did not refer to it, and used the “Short (< 4 minutes)” duration filter to remove long videos, which correspond to full episodes or large parts of the episodes).

For the analysis centered on higher ranked videos, we selected the top 10 videos of each TV series (205 of the 210 possible videos, since the search for one TV series provided only 5 videos even after we expanded the search terms).

After we identified and analyzed these 205 videos, we applied three more selective searches. Considering the official-nonexclusive combination as the dominant default or the minimum-effort form (the unmarked term), we complemented the absolute ranking (hence RA), composed of 205 videos, with the following rankings:

**Relative ranking B (RB):** the first 5 nonofficial (only fan-made, nonprofessional) videos of each series (105 videos)

**Relative ranking C (RC):** the first 5 official videos that provide unpublished (exclusive) material for each series (105 videos)

**Relative ranking D (RD):** the first 5 nonofficial (fan-made) videos that provide unpublished (exclusive) material for each series (105 videos)

This method could provide a total of 525 videos. However, when the first absolute ranking (RA) already included videos considered within more specific selections (RB, RC, and RD), we only searched for the videos needed to reach the sample of 5 videos per ranking. So each series provided a varying number of videos, from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 25. The inclusion of different numbers of videos for the different series within the full selection (a total of 314 different videos) does not affect our study as long as we specify in advance whether the data refer to the absolute ranking or the relative rankings, all of which are complete in the sense that it was possible to find videos of each series that fulfilled the requirements of each ranking.

Given that the last three rankings operate on ad hoc categories (official/nonofficial; exclusive/nonexclusive) that are not determined by the YouTube search engine, our samples were handmade since we needed to research the nature of the channel and the video itself in relation to the television broadcasts.

On the other hand, YouTube provides some of the data that allow us to describe each of the 314 videos: name of the channel that uploads it and its number of subscribers; the number of visits, likes, dislikes, and comments; and the date it was uploaded. Other data relative to the videos entailed a

quantitative and qualitative analysis and documentation on the Internet to determine whether the video refers to a concrete episode, and, if so, the date the episode was broadcast; the nature and degree of elaboration of the audio and the images; and the video format according to the most popular categories of short videos circulating on the Internet.

### Results

Our findings from search results for the first 100 most viewed videos are consistent with Burgess and Green's, with one exception: In our sample, nonexclusive videos are more predominant and receive more views than exclusive videos. This may be due to the fact that our search revolves around a preexisting audiovisual product, which may encourage the user's deployment of "quotes" rather than the creation of new content. However, our data suggest that it is the official work of the networks that tips the scales in favor of nonexclusive videos (TV networks provide more than five times as many nonexclusive videos than exclusive videos). (See Tables 2, 3, and 4.)

**Table 2. Sources and Views.**

Source		Number of videos	Average view count
Number of views	Official	39	501,736
	Nonofficial	61	74,352
	Total	100	

**Table 3. Nature of Images and View Count.**

Nature of images		Number of videos	Average view count
Number of views	Nonexclusive	60	347,560
	Exclusive	40	81,238
	Total	100	

**Table 4. Number of Views According to the Source.**

			Average view count	%	Videos
Official	Nature of images	Nonexclusive	577,426	33.0%	33
		Exclusive	85,441	6.0%	6
Nonofficial	Nature of images	Nonexclusive	66,614	27.0%	27
		Exclusive	80,496	34.0%	34

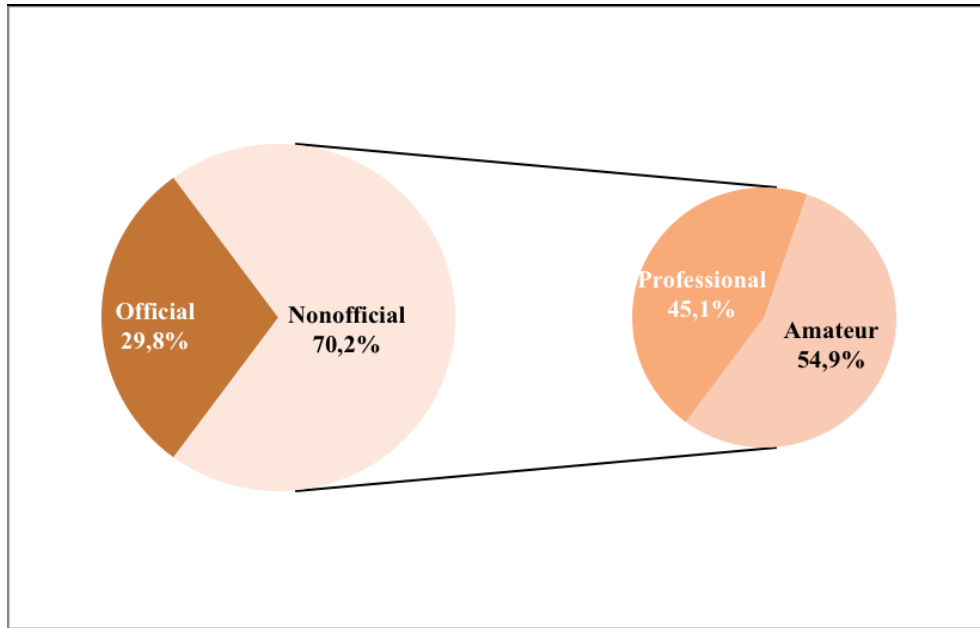
To answer RQ1—Are there more official or nonofficial videos among the higher ranked videos of the 21 TV series? What is their average number of views?—the presence of nonofficial videos (70%) increases with respect to the 100 most viewed videos category (61%), while the average view counts decreased in both cases. However, the trend detected in the study centered on the first 100 most viewed videos is maintained (see Table 5 and Figure 1).

**Table 5. Sources and Views.**

Source	Number of videos	%	Average view count
Official	61	29.8%	322,203
Professional nonofficial	65	31.7%	15,351
Amateur nonofficial	79	38.5%	47,789
Total	205	100.0%	
Source	Number of videos	%	Average view count
Professional nonofficial	65	45.1%	
Amateur nonofficial	79	54.9%	
Nonofficial	144	100.0%	33,147

There are fewer official videos (61) than nonofficial videos (144), at a proportion of 30%/70%, but the average number of views of the official videos is almost 10 times higher than that of the nonofficial videos. The official videos, 30% of the total, capture 80% of views (about 20 million); the remaining 70% nonofficial videos capture 20% of the views (under 5 million).

On the other hand, among the 144 nonofficial videos, most are of the amateur/fan subtype (79), compared to the ones produced by small audiovisual or similar companies (65), at a proportion of 55% versus 45%, as Figure 1 right pie chart shows. The average views variable also favors amateur nonofficial videos at a proportion of three to one—that is, of the 4.8 million views received by nonofficial videos, 3.8 corresponded to amateur videos.

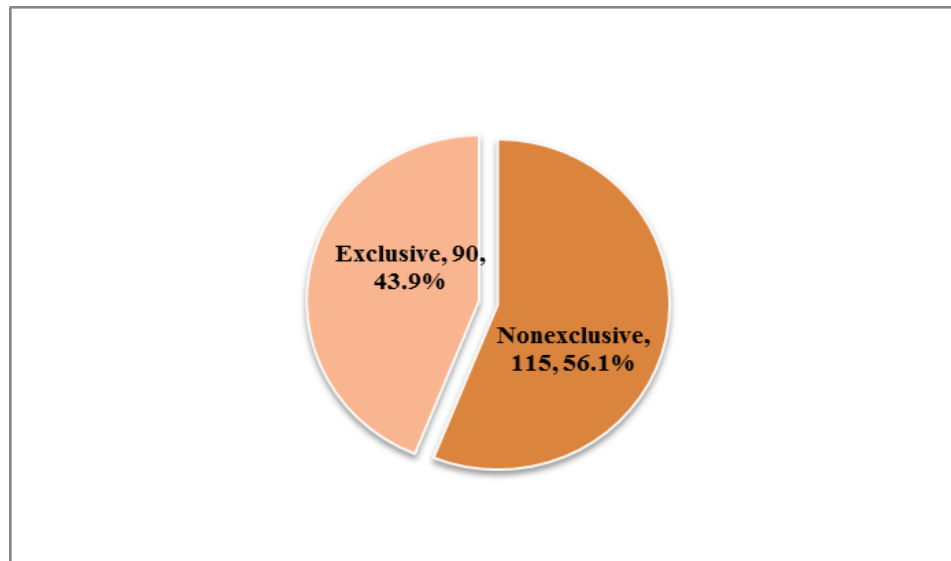


**Figure 1. Official videos vs. nonofficial videos (professional and amateur).**

To answer RQ2—Are there more exclusive or nonexclusive videos among the higher ranked videos of the 21 TV series (205)? What is their average number of views?—of the 205 higher ranked videos of the 21 TV series, 115 (56%) are nonexclusive, and 90 (44%) are exclusive. The average number of views received by the nonexclusive videos is five times higher than that received by exclusive videos. Altogether, the nonexclusive videos received 21 million views, compared to 3.4 million views received by the exclusive videos (see Table 6 and Figure 2).

**Table 6. Exclusivity and View Count.**

Nature of images	Number of videos	%	Average view count
Nonexclusive	115	56.1	182,891
Exclusive	90	43.9	37,724
Total	205	100	



**Figure 2. Exclusivity in the higher ranked videos (number and percentage).**

These findings contrast with those of Burgess and Green: In our case, among both the most viewed videos and the higher ranked videos on YouTube, most are those that replicate the TV broadcast rather than those that mix, edit, or incorporate unpublished material (for Burgess and Green, the percentages were 42% and 50%, respectively).

To answer RQ3—Which of the four possible types of video is the most predominant among the higher ranked videos of the 21 TV series? What is the average number of views reached by each type?—of the 205 higher ranked videos, the nonofficial and exclusive type is the most predominant ( $n = 77$  videos, 37.6%), followed by the nonofficial and nonexclusive type ( $n = 67$  videos, 32.7%). Behind those are the nonexclusive official videos ( $n = 48$ , 23.4%), and then the official and exclusive videos ( $n = 13$ , 6.3%). The highest average view count by far is in the official and nonexclusive type (398,499); the other three types range from 28,000 and 40,000 average views. In other words, 23% of the sample of videos (the official and nonexclusive type) receive more than 19 million views, 78% of the total number of views (24.4 million) (see Tables 7 and 8).

**Table 7. Source and Nature of Images.**

		Nature of images				Total	
		Nonexclusive		Exclusive		videos	%
		videos	%	videos	%		
Source	Official	48	<b>23.4%</b>	13	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>61</b>	29.7%
	Nonofficial	67	<b>32.7%</b>	77	<b>37.6%</b>	<b>144</b>	71.3%
	Total	<b>115</b>	56.1%	<b>90</b>	43.9%	<b>205</b>	100%

**Table 8. Type of Videos and View Count.**

Source	Nature of images	Average number of views
Official	Nonexclusive	398,449
	Exclusive	40,681
Nonofficial	Nonexclusive	28,461
	Exclusive	37,224

We carried out one absolute search (RA) and three specific searches (RB, RC, and RD), which were described earlier. However, we did not find 100% of the possible theoretical videos in any of the cases (210 for RA and 105 for RB, RC, and RD), as shown in Table 9.

**Table 9. Videos Found by Ranking.**

Ranking	Number of videos	%	Empty rows
B	99	94.3%	6
C	48	45.7%	57
D	96	91.4%	9

The involvement of users and fans in the creation of contents about the TV series (nonofficial, exclusive videos, RD) is much greater than the effort made by the networks and producers to provide unpublished contents, which favor engagement (official exclusive videos, RC). While we found 96 of the 105 possible exclusive videos made by fans, we only found half, 48 of 105, of the possible official exclusive videos..

The reach of the official videos—which, as we have seen, received significantly more views—is another matter. To answer RQ4—How do other popularity variables (such as likes, dislikes, comments, and subscribers) behave in relation to the origin and nature of the video?—we found out that, although the videos with more likes are associated with the official and nonexclusive category (8 of 10 videos with more likes correspond to this combination of variables, all of them with more than 1,000 likes and

occupying the top seven positions), the situation changes when the videos are sorted in relation to other categories of interaction.

Of the 10 videos with more dislikes, 6 correspond to the nonofficial and exclusive category and the other 4 to the official and nonexclusive category (the latter occupy the 1st, 2nd, 9th, and 10th positions). The discrepancy is manifested more with the amateur videos. The change in the trend is even more visible if we consider the critical threshold that leads people to write a comment: The nonofficial exclusive videos occupy 5 positions in the top 10 most commented videos, including the 1st, 3rd, and 4th positions.

The highest average numbers of subscribers overwhelmingly favors the official channels (452,830 on average) over the nonofficial channels (2,920); this makes sense because those channels are operated by networks and production companies that offer hundreds and even thousands of videos, which often include complete TV series, reality shows, news programs, and sports broadcasts.

A hypothesis to test in future studies would be whether users comment more on videos that already constitute an audiovisual commentary on a starting material shared by all and whether their experience indicates that they are likely to obtain a reply from the uploader of an amateur video (regardless of whether the uploader is the author) and unlikely that they will obtain a reply from a corporation that uses YouTube as a showcase or advertising tool and not as an interaction platform. In the case of the official video contributions, our experience in studies on Facebook (Tur-Viñes & Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, 2014) is that corporations do open a space but interact little or not at all in it, paving the way for horizontal interaction between users.

With regard to content, the most common formats in the strategy of the networks with exclusive video contributions (RC: official exclusive videos) have a distinctly advertising character (previews and promotional content, interviews with cast and crew members, features about the making of the program, recaps). These videos, being exclusive in relation to the broadcast content, do not provide anything narratively unique, distinctive, and valuable, which is a requirement of genuine transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2006). Amateur exclusive videos (RD) use more spontaneous formats (photos and music slideshows, fan-vids, songvids, v-logs, fan remixes, mashups) and emphasize such aspects as the soundtrack.

Other trends can be derived from quantitative research, although they cannot be explained in detail here. There does not seem to be a correlation between a TV series' average number of viewers and the total number of videos produced by a YouTube search (series that have large audiences can produce few total results, and vice versa). Neither does the longevity of a TV series assure a high number of uploaded videos, although it would seem reasonable to expect more videos about series that have run many seasons on air. However, a TV channel's policy with regard to YouTube does seem to be a determining factor (the Telecinco case is exemplary). And we do detect a correlation between the genre and mood of a TV series and the type of fan-vids produced around it: Romantic dramas yield videos that summarize the development of couples' relationships, taking dispersed fragments, and comedies foster comic gags about a character. The videos uploaded by the TV channels—synopses and the best TV



moments from past episodes as well as promos and sneak peaks of future episodes—emphasize those aspects in such a way that there seems to be a feedback loop between fans' contributions and the promotional bias chosen by the TV channel.

Thus, the factors that drive users to upload videos about a TV series or to make comments about the videos they find on YouTube about that series are not the same as those that determine the series' success in terms of television audience size. In fact, one might even venture to say the opposite (in the absence of specific research using an ad hoc methodology). It is quite possible that precisely those TV series that are most popular on YouTube are not those with the largest TV audience but those that are most viewed on the Internet. The user's profile would be that of a digital native who is used to taking advantage of the convergence of the narrative universe that she or he is interested in, on a single device (computer or laptop) but spread across multiple platforms (TV channel Webs and fan Webs, social networks, wikis, specialized blogs)—that is, a transmedia consumer who does not necessarily resemble the TV single-media television consumer (Scolari, 2009).

### Discussion and Conclusions

Our research is based on an empirical precedent with objectives more general than ours—that of Burgess and Green (2009). However, the data they obtained are comparable with ours to some degree: Both studies registered a higher number of nonofficial and exclusive videos, but also found that the videos with the most views belonged to the official and nonexclusive category and that there was more interaction through comments on amateur exclusive videos, which were perceived as more honest and friendly territory for the exchange of views.

Nevertheless, our study, based on data collected seven years later, detected trend changes: higher rankings of official videos, which occupy the first positions when performing common searches and, correspondingly, a lower visibility of fan-made videos. On the other hand, we found some typical particularities of this phenomenon in Spain: the TV channels' scarce investment in YouTube as a touchpoint that adds diegetic extensions to the TV series' fictional universe. Consequently, users either opt for the consumption of purely practical, informative, or promotional elements on YouTube (recaps, best moments, interviews, or gossip about the actors), or they use YouTube as a *replacement for* (in case of having missed an episode) rather than as a *supplement to* the fictional story.

If we combine the two main variables of our study, a clear polarization is evident between two extremes: official nonexclusive videos and nonofficial (fan-made) exclusive videos. This polarization leaves the intermediate categories in a weaker position. It could be argued that YouTube users have become used to expecting only a repository of what they have already watched (or missed) on broadcast TV from official sources, and to expecting something different from the TV series' fans.

We could characterize this polarity by using the terms *consolatory* and *nutritious* deployed by Eco (1968) for the rhetoric of advertising. The consolatory view would fit with the understanding of YouTube as an *archive* (Gehl, 2009), and the nutritious view with its understanding as a *novelty window display* (fan-made as well as industry-made). An archive is a collection of objects that have already been produced and commodified in the market and have already been used: an exchange value and a use value

that the archive removes and transforms. Both the series viewers' recreational use during its TV broadcast, with its weekly cadence and schedule, as well as its value set by the channel, which obtains its benefits from the advertisements inserted in the promotional breaks, are modified when that episode, or parts of it, are viewed on YouTube. The viewer watches those contents in another context, outside of the television flow, in the order and the dosage that he or she establishes for him- or herself. On the other hand, commercials disappear (although they can reappear in other ways).

But neither a novelty window display nor a channel specializing in airing premieres is an archive. It is the place where the content originally appeared, it is the epiphany of the novelty, and that place is also YouTube.

The tension between YouTube as a repository or reservoir of clips that allows prosthetic audiovisual memories and as a place to go in search of unprecedented content gives it its particular strength. But we would be mistaken if we considered the television corporations and film production companies to be nothing more than suppressors of change and innovation on the Internet, determined to preserve their main business—the small or big screen, respectively. Likewise, it would be naive to confer upon fans the sole responsibility of supplying the Internet with creative videos and unprecedented audiovisual stories. In each case, we must evaluate whether the TV corporation's strategies and user tactics are, overall, more consolatory than nutritious, or vice versa.

### ***Corporate Strategies***

Antena 3 and La1 tend to make extensive and intensive use of their TV broadcast contents when they decide to use YouTube: either the series' complete episodes or seasons (which are outside the scope of our study) and promos, previews, or other promotional material also shown on TV (these videos dominate the top search results with the "short duration" filter). They do not seem to reserve exclusive contents for a platform like YouTube, with more than 20 million users in Spain in 2013: Only 6% of the 100 most viewed videos and of the 10 higher ranked videos from each series—a total of 205—are official exclusive.

A3 and La1 tend to conceive YouTube primarily as an overt tool to advertise their products (Franquet & Vila, 2014, on the specific case of the RTVE Corporation). They do not use YouTube as platform to implement transmedia strategies to attract people who do not watch the series on TV, nor to reward the most demanding television audiences who complement their TV watching experience with other screens that add value to their enjoyment. YouTube does not offer actual narrative extensions (exclusive scenes, webisodes, or mobisodes uploaded to YouTube) nor extensions to an extradiegetic periphery (exclusive interviews with actors and showrunners, bios of the actors, historical data about the time represented in the series, etc.)—that is, more or less covert promotional forms that may be considered to be adapted to YouTube.

Telecinco, Spain's most watched channel from 2013 to 2015, completely opposes the circulation of its contents on YouTube. It does not have an institutional YouTube channel and has engaged in prolonged legal disputes against YouTube. However, these strategies, which could be described as

conservative in varying degrees, do generate revenue. Telecinco remains the leading TV channel despite turning its back on YouTube (due to the fact that its average audience is older than that of its rivals; Barlovento Comunicación, 2014). The official nonexclusive videos of A3 and La1 obtained high view counts and high rankings, while their few official exclusive videos go unnoticed on YouTube. Thus, they perfectly meet their classical function: new promotion platforms that ignore their functionality as original content vehicles and potential users' engagement.

### ***User Tactics***

The creative work of fans on YouTube is much more intense (twice as much in absolute terms and six times as much in the sample of the 205 higher ranked videos) compared to the new contributions made by TV networks and production companies, which have copies of the recorded original material and professional, technical, and human resources to produce new derived material but do not seem to have the will to devote time, money, and human resources to produce new contents for YouTube. The formats in which the creativity of fans is reflected vary and include original titles, new soundtracks, scene selections based on themes or characters, musical slide shows about a character, mashups of different series, and v-logs.

The reach of this amateur *tactical creativity* is limited. Although nonofficial exclusive videos are the most represented category among the 100 most viewed videos (34%) and the best represented among the 10 higher ranked videos of each series (77, or 37.6%, of a total of 205 videos), the number of views is higher among official and nonexclusive videos: The average view count is 570,000 among the 100 most viewed official and nonexclusive videos and 322,000 among the 205 higher ranked official and nonexclusive videos, while the average view counts for nonofficial exclusive videos are 80,000 and 47,000, respectively. These figures suggest that YouTube is used as an archive of materials that have been already shown and seen that can be searched for by users who re-create their favorite scenes or who view them for the first time because the videos were suggested by their contacts, whether official or amateur entities.

The power of videos produced by a vernacular creativity seems reduced compared to the power of the already-known images generated by production companies. And this is despite the fact that corporate communication tends to be emphatic and to respond to commercial interests, while the productions of users should be fresher and more spontaneous. However, without a doubt, strategies and tactics not only compete with each other but tend to level off. The low level of creativity from the sample of TV networks to use YouTube as a channel for the transmedia expansion and deepening of TV texts is almost the same as the level shown by the majority of fans who do not seem to make an effort in this regard. We can predict that if TV networks demonstrate a more determined creative investment, this could be replicated by fans who are more committed to the TV program or series.

### ***Broadcast YouTube***

From the beginning, YouTube was in the vortex of the basic dialectic that pertains to the circulation of contents on the Internet and that we have expressed by resuming the de Certeauvian

dichotomy: that which places corporate strategies against user tactics. Without a doubt, the new public visibility of the latter (de Certeau described those tactics as "invisible" and "silent") has been the destabilizing factor. This has become an unprecedented nuisance for both sides: Media corporations are upset by uncontrolled circulation of the contents they produce, and users are occasionally distrustful with regard to the appearance of the corporations as agents in an open and libertarian space of exchange that they considered their own. But the dialectic is not just about the property; it is also about the hegemony of the visibility of the images and stories (beyond their origin and copyright). This is the reason for the relative lack of discrimination between strategies (of corporations) and tactics (of users). When officialdom has tried to limit the story's canon, the fandom's narrative intrusions, often apocryphal, have reminded them that the borders are not stationary. This has brought unceasing appropriations of the other's territory, willingly or by force.

It is obvious that YouTube is not a mere showcase or a neutral scenario where the strategies and tactics of third parties are deployed. We do not know exactly what search algorithms calculate the ranking for YouTube videos, but we assume that YouTube *professional-generated content*, which is high quality and ad-friendly, may be more attractive than *user-generated content* (or "loser-generated content," as skeptics say; Petersen, 2008).

It is likely that YouTube's partners, which include TV networks and production companies that own TV channels and share advertising revenues with YouTube, receive preferential treatment over fan-made videos that can contain (creatively or not) contents or motifs from the series but that are unpredictable, unprogrammable, and not easily profitable.<sup>6</sup> That is why in recent years we have witnessed YouTube transitioning toward a viewing model that involves the inclusion of ads that are similar to the ones offered in traditional free-to-air TV and stricter control of the materials uploaded by users.

The appearance of ads on YouTube videos has become an indicator of the videos' quality and the interest they generate among users, while ad-free user-generated videos raise doubts about their quality and entertainment value.

As we already knew, YouTube has never been able to meet its utopian motto, "Broadcast Yourself," because it is contradictory: The ability to be broadcast is not coextensive with the billions of *yourselves* who watch videos, not even with the hundreds of thousands who upload videos, because the attention economy requires us to be selective and because each new broadcast video condemns to irrelevance millions of other videos that fail to catch our attention. The tension between democratic storage and display for profit has become a troubling aspect of YouTube. Another troubling aspect of YouTube is that it separates a nutritious production and use from a consolatory production and use, in

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<sup>6</sup> A study about YouTube Spain's home page found that 43% of the videos shown on that page came from TV channels. TV channels that sign partner agreements with YouTube enjoy some advantages: They are allowed to exceed the uploading time limits, and the related videos that appear next to the reproduction of their contents belong exclusively to the channel (favoring its own feedback). Moreover, they are allowed to link the YouTube channel to the official channel web page to redirect the traffic toward their core business unit (Gallardo, 2013).

creative and specifically narrative terms, and that pertains to both vernacular grassroots videos as well as corporate industry-made ones.

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